

Speech on behalf of Foreign Minister Frans Timmermans by secretary general Renée Jones-Bos (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), for the Nuclear Knowledge Summit in Amsterdam, 21 March 2014.

A very warm welcome on behalf of minister of Foreign Affairs Minister Timmermans. He really would have loved to be here, he was scheduled to be here, but as you know there are quite a few things happening in the world and he had to go to Brussels last night. He sends his best regards, because he is very committed to this subject.

And a word of thanks to Clingendael for organising this event. We all know how complicated it is to organise events like these. Thank you for doing that, it is very important.

I feel very humbled actually to be here today with all of you, as nuclear knowledge – this is your field of expertise – is right up there with rocket science. For the man in the street, nuclear experts are really the rock stars of science, that is a very nice way of saying it. And some would say: nerds of distinction, another way of putting it.

The most famous representative of the nuclear security community is not here today. I am referring of course to Homer Simpson, the famously unskilled safety inspector at the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant. His security policy is simple, and I am quoting: 'If something goes wrong at the plant, blame the guy who can't speak English.' In the episode called 'Dial N for Nerder', he's sneaking away from his wife Marge, who asks him why he's going to work on a Saturday. Homer's reply is that he has to count the atoms, exclaiming: 'Conservation of mass. It's the law!'¹

Well, Homer may not be here, but his mission is our mission as well: conservation of mass, by keeping control of the atoms. And that's what this is all about.

¹ fourteenth episode of The Simpsons' nineteenth season, originally broadcast on 9 March 2008

Ladies and gentlemen,

Nuclear terrorism is a global threat. The Nuclear Security Summit is bringing together 58 world leaders to tackle this issue. It is a problem that cannot be solved by individual states alone. And to succeed these world leaders need the input of industry, NGOs, academia, foundations. They need all of your efforts, in all kinds of areas:

- We need you to hold 'track 1½' meetings where government officials debate with academics and others. I am thinking of the work done by Clingendael, by the Fissile Material Working Group and the Asian Institute for Policy Studies. By the Nuclear Security Governance Experts Group (NSGEG) or the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. Via the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) or through the Stanley Foundation. All of this work is extremely useful to us.
- We want you to do research, to develop innovations that reduce risks. Take the work that has been done on nuclear forensics – I'm very proud to mention the contribution of the Netherlands Forensics Institute in The Hague in this respect.
- And we urge you to continue to play your role as watchdog, to help build support for better nuclear security and to lobby, informing both parliaments and public opinion. Because these are complicated issues

Sometimes people say there is an inherent conflict of interest between governmental and non-governmental circles. I don't agree with that at all. I think the gap between government and academia or NGOs is not as wide as it seems. Many of you have served in your countries' administrations (I see somebody here on the first row who did that).

This exchange between our respective circles is something I'd like to see happening more often in my own country. We do quite a lot of job rotation within the government, it is on the increase. But job rotation between government and the outside world is lagging behind. I think we need more mobility here, because it's good for government and it's good for academia, NGOs and foundations.

I strongly believe that the network society we live in today requires more contact between those inside and outside government. Modern diplomacy, as I see it, should help create and form part of that contact. The policy arena is no longer just government officials giving top-down directives. Private companies, consultancy firms, NGOs and many others are now more horizontally connected than ever before. And diplomacy should be an integral part of that network.

Your active involvement in work that used to be the government's exclusive domain has helped greatly in moving us towards the goals of the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS). Allow me to highlight a few of your accomplishments, linking them with the NSS agenda and a few points regarding the position of my government.

We won't achieve all our ambitions during this Summit. And I'm not at liberty to disclose everything that's under discussion. It's an ongoing process, and we are building momentum in the lead-up to the Washington Summit in 2016. Despite these caveats, I'll try to be as candid as possible in the interest of informing your debate of today and tomorrow.

NSS goal no. 1 - Reducing the amount of dangerous nuclear material in the world (highly enriched uranium (HEU) and plutonium)

- What have you accomplished?

The Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) helps assess risks with its Nuclear Materials Security Index. Take this vital statistic: since 2012 the number of countries that possess more than a kilo of weapons-usable nuclear material has fallen from 32 to 25 countries. If there is less nuclear material, and existing material is stored at fewer sites, terrorists will have fewer opportunities to get hold of it.

We have phased out fuel; we are converting HEU targets in the biggest radio-isotope factory in Europe (in Petten) into LEU. And we have built a storage facility where we will store HEU in a way that ensures it is absolutely safe and secure.

The International Panel on Fissile Material and others help by estimating what material remains on all sides, whether it's HEU or plutonium, used for civil or

military applications. Universities and research institutes have converted their reactors, enabling them to use low-enriched uranium and greatly reducing the risks.

- *And what is on the NSS agenda?*

Previously the discussion has focused on HEU. But we all know that plutonium can also be misused to make nuclear explosives. In the upcoming NSS, the Netherlands as Chair has initiated a debate about the size of plutonium stocks in relation to plutonium use. We feel it's important not to keep more plutonium than is needed. This is an issue we'd like to see translated into concrete actions in the follow-up to this Summit.

Our second NSS goal - Enhancing the security of nuclear material, nuclear facilities and radioactive sources

- *What have you accomplished?*

I really want to highlight your contribution to training and education: improving education results in more highly qualified personnel. The Master's programme in Nuclear Security at Delft University of Technology is an excellent example.

The World Institute for Nuclear Security (WINS) promotes personnel certification in the nuclear industry – bringing together more than 800 people from over 60 countries – to share best practices in efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism. Like WINS the Netherlands thinks it is important to go beyond raising awareness and to work towards improving professional standards. That is why we decided to financially support the activities of the WINS Academy.

And in the run-up to this summit, academics and NGOs have developed the new concept of 'assurances'. Your third panel today on 'Information Sharing and Peer Review' will carry this discussion forward.

- *And what is on the NSS agenda?*

Within the NSS there has been a lively discussion between governments about transparency: what information can we share about the measures we've taken without giving away secrets and compromising operational security? How can this information be used to build confidence?

States would like assurances that security measures abroad are effective, or at least adequate. To what extent can a sovereign state be required or even compelled to disclose information about national implementation of the measures that are under discussion?

Some countries fear that sharing knowledge involving sovereign rights is a slippery slope, especially when it comes to military stockpiles. The Netherlands advocates sharing information with other countries wherever possible, for instance by sharing non-sensitive information from reports by IPPAS missions.²

We are in dialogue with the nuclear industry, as they are on the frontline of security. Here we have a common goal, but different responsibilities. In each country nuclear security rules are laid down by the government. The industry observes these rules so that nuclear materials are properly secured. How can governments, the nuclear industry and national regulators work together more closely without compromising their individual roles and responsibilities?

One thing is clear: we need to stay focused on both the hardware and the software necessary for enhancing security. That means installing physical barriers and detection equipment, as well as improving the computer systems that control nuclear facilities.

² International Physical Protection Advisory Service, created by the IAEA to assist countries in strengthening their national nuclear security regime.

In addition, we will need to keep a clear focus on the human factor; the 'wetware' component of security, if you will. We need to promote a nuclear security culture, raising awareness among nuclear facility employees of the risks of nuclear terrorism, and improving training for security personnel. I applaud the EU side event on this issue that took place yesterday.

The third NSS goal - Improving international cooperation

- *What have you accomplished?*

I already mentioned the track 1½ meetings, where government officials debate with others. I am grateful for the suggestions we've received concerning future forms of nuclear security architecture, like those offered by the Nuclear Security Governance Expert Group.

I think your work today in Panels 1 and 2 – on improving regime cohesion and regional approaches to nuclear security – will also be very instructive.

- *And what is on the NSS agenda?*

Of course we want a cohesive regime. But it is very difficult, if not impossible, to bring civil and military material together in one comprehensive regime. My view is that a more cohesive regime must be built step by step. There is not much appetite among governments at the moment for the grand sweep of a new unifying Nuclear Security Convention.

Countries cooperate on the basis of a range of international agreements, guidelines and initiatives, as well as in international organisations. So I do see the need for a logical and comprehensive **nuclear security architecture**. Relevant international activities should be better coordinated to ensure that relevant agreements are being fully implemented.

One question to be debated at the NSS is: what should the components of this architecture be? Another is how national security measures can be improved by

sharing experiences at international level. My country is not alone in believing that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plays a crucial coordinating role in this respect. Some states are proposing additional mechanisms, such as review conferences and other fora.

It is a point of concern, incidentally, that the keystone of this architecture, the amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM), has not yet entered into force. Ratification by a number of states is still needed. We urge all parties to take all the necessary steps as rapidly as possible.

Looking into the future – what are our ambitions?

President Obama's original initiative was always meant as a short-term plan. We welcome the 2016 Summit in the US, as a lot of work still needs to be done. But the fact remains: the process was not intended to be permanent. The momentum that summits create cannot last forever. In due course, other structures must be strong enough to sustain that momentum. The IAEA will continue to play an important role in this regard.

Nuclear security is part of the broader international disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. As a member of NATO and the UN, and as a country committed to international security, the Netherlands will seek out partners worldwide to move the nuclear disarmament agenda forward.

Reducing the number of nuclear weapons does not automatically mean that there will be less material to be secured. The nuclear content of decommissioned warheads or missiles has to be secured and processed. It can then serve as fuel for civilian use. There is a more direct link with non-proliferation: improved nuclear security coupled with less nuclear material will lower the risk of proliferation of nuclear weapons and knowledge.

We should remember though that the discussion on nuclear disarmament as such is not part of the NSS. This is for two reasons:

- First of all because the NSS process is meant to improve security and prevent nuclear terrorism. And this is where we can make progress. I think it is unique for countries like Israel and Arab countries, and India and Pakistan, to find themselves collaborating on this issue.
- And secondly because with 58 world leaders we would never be able to reach agreement on this issue. There are regular fora on disarmament and non-proliferation. And there are better ways to mobilise like-minded states, like the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) in which my country is involved.

Having said that, the NSS does provide opportunities for information sharing and coalition building. During the Summit minister of Foreign Affairs Timmermans will be hosting a lunch for ministers of Foreign Affairs on nuclear risks and international security. Informal discussions at this level are few and far between, and not an easy matter if only because of the language barriers. So we are delighted that all the participating countries have agreed to this programme and to this discussion.

In conclusion: it seems fitting here, in the spring of 2014, to close with a reference to events that happened almost exactly a hundred years ago.

In May 1914, in the Tibetan village of Moyey, a boy was born whom we came to know as Sherpa Tenzing Norgay. We aren't sure of his exact birthday, but we know his accomplishments very well. He made the name of his tribe a household word. You will agree with me that 'Sherpa' has a better ring to it than 'Bergführer', as the mountain guides are called in the Swiss and Austrian Alps. I somehow think it doesn't have the same international ring, although I love the German language

Tenzing Norgay made the first successful ascent to the summit of Mount Everest, together with Sir Edmund Hillary. Sherpas like Tenzing provided the knowledge with which mountains could be scaled; their hardiness, expertise and stamina were indispensable. Without Sherpa Tenzing, Hillary could not have succeeded.

We are now about to ascend another Summit, the Nuclear Security Summit. And we wouldn't be here were it not for you. You are all part of the Sherpa community. On behalf of my government, I want to thank you all very much for your

contribution to the Nuclear Security Summit 2014. The communiqué is almost finalised, the 'real' Sherpas are coming together this afternoon. In every phrase you will find elements that your contributions have influenced, inspired or informed.

I want to thank you very much for that on behalf of the Netherlands' government and I wish you a very fruitful and useful discussion for today and tomorrow. I hope you will keep on informing and inspiring us.

Thank you very much.